

Astoria, Oregon
Daily Astorian
(Cir. D. 8,498)

FEB 7 1978

Focus on the main function

66-P
Jimmy Carter put his Naval Academy classmate, Stansfield Turner, in charge of the CIA because the agency urgently needed the attention of someone whom the President could trust. We say that assuming the President wanted to be sure that the CIA would continue to perform its principal function of spying on the Communists but to be sure also that the CIA would cease prying into the affairs of U.S. citizens.

Admiral Turner has fired several CIA employees and reporters say there will be more dismissals. We hear that morale within the agency has been shattered. That doesn't tell us anything definitive because we don't know why the agents were fired. Did they have to go because they'd been involved in improper domestic surveillance or did they not fit into the new direction Admiral Turner and President Carter are charting for the agency?

After all the ruckus about some unsavory CIA operations, a congressional committee was appointed to exercise surveillance, but not to reveal to the public what the agency was doing. On the face of it that was a good move. But we'd feel better about it if we knew for sure that there will be more

concern with intelligence operations than with satisfying the standards of some liberals who think that spying is a nasty business that a democracy shouldn't be doing.

Of course it's a nasty business, but most countries are engaged in it to some degree because self-preservation requires it.

Perhaps the CIA needed cleaning out and reorganizing. President Carter obviously thought so. But we hope he and Admiral Turner aren't concentrating on satisfying the critics who can be totally satisfied only if the U.S. government gets out of the intelligence business. The reorganization should be in the direction of making our intelligence operations more effective and more reliable.

Our government needs to minimize the guessing and to get the facts of what the major communist powers, China and the Soviet Union, are up to. That should be the essential function of the CIA and it should be so well performed that the possibility that either power could surprise us militarily becomes virtually nonexistent. Let the bleeding hearts complain but don't permit them to have their way.